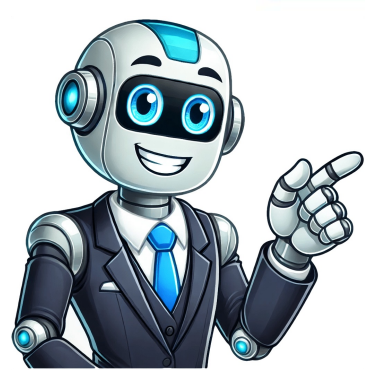


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hunt – not actually nocturnal – large herbivores such as wild boar, cattle, goats and deer. In captivity, they are fed protein such as chicken as well as, presumably, the additional nutrients, vitamins and minerals they need. White Tigers are great swimmers (Photo: gracethang via iStock)White tigers are one of the world’s most beautiful and distinctive animals and they have been closely studied in captivity for many years. Here are the best facts about white tigers.White Tigers lack a Key PigmentThe white fur of white tigers is caused by a lack of the pigment pheomelanin which gives Bengal tigers their orange fur. For a white tiger to be born, both parents must carry a recessive gene – known as an allele – preventing the pigment from colouring the skin. This is known as leucism.Today’s White Tigers Descend from One SpecimenIn 1951, a white tiger cub was captured in India and given to the Maharajah of Rewa who named him Mohan, roughly translated as ‘Enchanter’. After a series of breeding experiments that yielded only orange cubs, he was bred with his own daughter – Radha – producing a white cub. Therein started a breeding program in India and Mohini, one of the first white cubs was sold to an American businessman and a separate breeding program started in the USA.Not all White Tigers are White...Some are more of a light cream colour with very light brown or grey stripes and in very rare circumstances, a white tiger can be born without stripes at all. In 2009, Fareeda was born without stripes – the first white tiger born in Africa – to two striped white tigers. It is thought that there are just a handful of pure white tigers on earth.Poor Climbers, Great Swimmers, Better Sleepers!Contrary to popular belief, white tigers are great swimmers and have been known to breach boundaries such as moats and water sources to get to food. They’re not particularly good at climbing trees but they are expert sleepers, averaging 16 – 18 hours a day! A snow tiger, or Panthera tigris, is a Bengal tiger with a coat that is white instead of the more common orange hue. Snow tigers are not a separate species. Also known as white tigers, snow tigers aren’t albinos. The white coloration occurs when each parent provides the recessive gene needed for white fur, an extremely rare occurrence in the wild. A snow tiger’s white coat most often has dark stripes just like those of an orange-colored Bengal tiger, although occasionally one is born with no stripes or with stripes so pale that they are barely noticeable.Snow Tigers reach maturity after two to three years. Male white tigers are larger than females. A male snow tiger can weigh up to 507 pounds (230 kilograms) and be almost 10 feet (3 meters) long, while the largest females weigh around 375 pounds (170 kilograms) and are about 8 feet (2.5 meters) long. Snow tigers are generally larger than their orange counterparts. This endangered species is almost extinct in the wild.The snow tiger is native to India and Southeast Asia, but most of them live in zoos as a result of breeding programs to produce white offspring from captive tigers carrying the rare, recessive genes. A snow tiger is a carnivore, and eats other mammals such as wild boar, buffalo, deer, and goat in the wild. Newborn tigers drink mother’s milk, but switch to meat when they are several months old. Snow tigers are generally solitary as adults, but the female tends her offspring until they are able to take care of themselves, at around two to three years of age.White tigers can’t run as far as some other wild cats, but since they hunt at night, they are able to catch prey using stealth. They prefer habitat with plenty of foliage for cover and a steady source of water. The adult snow tiger can eat an average of 40 pounds (18 kilograms) of meat a day, and will eat even more if food is plentiful after an especially good hunt.Some people believe that the term snow tiger sometimes refers to the snow leopard, a close relative of the Bengal tiger. Others believe that the term snow tiger refers to the larger Siberian tiger, since it lives in a snowy habitat. The Siberian tiger is orange, however, and so far there is only rumor that white Siberian tigers exist. A colour variation of the famed Bengal and Siberian tigers, white tigers, sometimes known as ‘snow tigers’ or ‘royal tigers’ are a genetic anomaly (called leucism) caused by a double recessive gene so rare that it’s estimated that it occurs only in one out of every 10,000 live births. It is believed that the very first white tigers were seen in a region of southeastern China. However, since the 1500s, the vast majority of white tigers have been seen in India. The beautiful and piercing stare of a White Tiger (Photo: sculder19 via iStock)With a thousand-yard stare, sapphire-blue eyes and an almost mythical appearance, white tigers capture the imagination like few other members of the animal kingdom – and there are many fascinating facts about white tigers. Looking fierce (Photo: Diy13 via iStock)In terms of size, white tigers tend to grow to a slightly faster rate than their orange cousins, they are a little heavier on average and are bigger at birth.White Bengal tigers are fully grown when they reach three years old. Males can weigh as much as 260kg and can grow to around three metres long (females are smaller, topping out at around 170kg). But one of the best white tiger facts is that their stripes are as unique as a human’s fingerprints, and are not just fur markings. If you were to shave a white tiger – and we certainly don’t suggest you try – their stripes are visible on their skin.The lifespan of the white tiger is no different to that of classic orange and black tigers. Fit and healthy white tigers with the proper diet and care can live in captivity for around twenty years. A White Tiger having a lazy day (Photo: MagicColors via iStock)Sadly, it is believed that white tigers are extinct in the wild – although this is a matter of ongoing debate amongst scientists and researchers. The last white tiger believed to have been seen in the wild was shot in 1958. Today around the world there are something like 200 white tigers living in captivity – approximately half in India – in zoos, circuses, rescue sanctuaries and other places where animals are displayed and their continued breeding is the subject of much controversy. A white Tiger catching his prey (Photo: beltsazardaniel via iStock)Like all other tigers, white tigers are carnivores. However, as there are no white tigers in the wild for which we have any meaningful dietary data, we can only assume that when there was a wild population they would stealthily hunt – mainly nocturnally – large herbivores such as wild boar, cattle, goats and deer. In captivity, they are fed protein such as chicken as well as, presumably, the additional nutrients, vitamins and minerals they need. White Tigers are great swimmers (Photo: gracethang via iStock)White tigers are one of the world’s most beautiful and distinctive animals and they have been closely studied in captivity for many years. Here are the best facts about white tigers.White Tigers lack a Key PigmentThe white fur of white tigers is caused by a lack of the pigment pheomelanin which gives Bengal tigers their orange fur. For a white tiger to be born, both parents must carry a recessive gene – known as an allele – preventing the pigment from colouring the skin. 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